



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

August 13, 1998

H.R. 3109

Thomas Cole National Historic Site Act

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Resources on July 22, 1998

Assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 3109 would cost the federal government between \$5 million and \$10 million over the next five years. H.R. 3109 would not affect direct spending or receipts; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply.

H.R. 3109 would establish as an affiliated area of the National Park System the Thomas Cole National Historic Site in New York. The site, consisting of about three acres of land on which the former home and studio of the artist are located, would continue to be owned and operated by the Greene County Historical Society. The bill would authorize the National Park Service (NPS) to execute cooperative agreements with the society, a local nonprofit organization, to preserve the house and other on-site structures and to assist with educational programs. The NPS may also enter into such agreements with the society, the state, the Thomas Cole Foundation, or other groups to assist them in developing and funding art exhibits, resident artist programs, and other activities. H.R. 3109 also would authorize the NPS to acquire art work and other personal property associated with the historic site. The bill would require the NPS to develop a general management plan for the site. Finally, the bill would authorize the appropriation of whatever sums are necessary for these purposes.

Assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts, CBO estimates that the NPS would spend about \$5 million over the next few years to develop an interpretive program for the new historic site, restore and improve site structures, perform needed research and studies, and, finally, to finance the society's general management plan. In addition to this amount, and again assuming appropriation of amounts requested for this purpose, the agency could purchase art work as authorized by the bill. CBO estimates that such acquisitions could cost as much as \$5 million. Routine operating and maintenance expenses of the historic site would remain the responsibility of the historical society. The NPS could provide assistance to the society for interpretive activities, but we estimate that the annual costs of such assistance or assistance under other cooperative agreements would not be significant. These estimates are based on information provided by the NPS and the historical society.

H.R. 3109 contains no intergovernmental mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would have no significant impact on the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

The bill would impose new private-sector mandates on the Greene County Historical Society. As requested by the society, the bill would require the society to administer the historic site in a manner consistent with all laws generally applicable to units of the NPS and to develop a general management plan for the site with the assistance of the Secretary of the Interior. Based on information provided by the society and the NPS, CBO estimates that the direct costs of complying with these private-sector mandates would fall well below the statutory threshold established in UMRA (\$100 million in 1996, adjusted annually for inflation) in any of the first five years, in part because the society already manages the site as a historic landmark.

The CBO staff contacts are Deborah Reis (for federal costs) and Lesley Frymier (for the private-sector impact). This estimate was approved by Robert A. Sunshine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.